



# Commandant's NOTE

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## TAKING CARE OF THE SOLDIER—TRAINING HIM

In the January-February 1992 issue of *INFANTRY* Magazine, I talked about taking care of the soldier by providing him with the best equipment industry can produce. In this issue, I will address the topic of taking care of the soldier by providing the best possible training, and specifically individual training.

Clearly, these two concerns are linked under the larger topic of taking care of our soldiers; our success or failure in future conflicts will depend upon how well they are equipped and how well they are trained to use their equipment. The success of infantrymen and infantry units during *JUST CAUSE* and *DESERT STORM* is a positive reflection of our progress to date in both of these critical areas. Our success in recent battles underscores the importance of training as we will fight, and of replicating as closely as possible those conditions under which we could expect to deploy. In this regard, we must also continue to train both vehicle crews and dismounts together. Units deployed into Southwest Asia had done this, and it paid off in combat. Our emphasis on night operations proved to be equally critical to success; we will continue to build upon our experience in Grenada, Panama, and the Gulf War to enhance our dominance of the night. In these and other areas there remain, however, many improvements to be made, and our challenge is to make them in a time of shrinking force structures and reduced resources.

We are all concerned that cutbacks in money

and manpower could jeopardize the Army's readiness. General Gordon O. Sullivan, Chief of Staff of the Army, cautions us not to allow any more "Task Force Smiths," referring to the understrength, poorly trained, and inadequately equipped lead unit in the Korean conflict.

This is not an idle challenge, as we search for ways to reduce costs and, simultaneously, to maintain high standards of readiness in the infantry force. In training ammunition alone, we may see cuts as high as 50 percent; we will therefore need innovative training programs for everything from basic rifle marksmanship to company and battalion live fire training. Simulators and training devices for the Bradley force will become even more important to building and maintaining proficiency, but even these will train only some of the tasks. Simulations will be a useful and cost-effective element of our training, but the Infantry will still require tough range and field training to develop the hardened, skilled warriors our missions will demand. We are looking at ways of improving the infantryman's rifle marksmanship skills—in both long-range and close-in engagements, with moving and stationary targets, and under day, night, and NBC conditions. The final structure of such a program will necessarily be influenced by the available range facilities, devices, and ammunition.

As new equipment is fielded, we systematically study the effect it will have on the unit that will be receiving it and on the soldier who will be operating



it. We also take a systematic look at the new individual soldier tasks and at all the steps it takes to accomplish each of them. This directly affects our decision on which tasks are to be included in later editions of the soldier's manual for that particular military occupational specialty (MOS).

In the same fashion, as doctrinal manuals are published to tell the field how to fight at the squad, platoon, company, and battalion levels, we also develop and publish mission training plans (MTPs) and drill books that support them. These publications, which are tied directly to the latest field manuals, describe how to train units and how to evaluate their training. Right now, our focus is on producing ARTEP 7-7J (Drill), for the Bradley Fighting Vehicle-equipped infantry, and ARTEP 7-8 MTP, for infantry rifle platoons and squads.

The transition from the Skill Qualification Test (SQT) to the Self-Development Test marks a significant shift in our approach to measuring a soldier's job knowledge. The most noticeable change is that the new test includes questions on training and leadership and focuses on noncommissioned officers in Skill Levels 2 through 4. Although the MOS-related questions will be drawn largely from questions previously used in the SQT, the test will now be broad-based rather than tracked.

The number of MOS-related questions has been reduced to about 60 and they appear in a format different from that of previous tests. The questions are grouped by subject area and are preceded by a situation that soldiers must apply in selecting an answer. Junior enlisted soldiers will still have such events as the Common Tasks Test

and the Expert Infantryman's Badge Test to challenge their mastery of individual skills.

The Infantry School is committed to managing this change, as it affects the infantry at large, as closely and rationally as possible. We will continue to provide the force with the best quality individual training through our 23 resident programs and our many correspondence programs. We will also provide the most authoritative information possible in the 90-plus manuals we publish.

These are only some of the innovative approaches to the challenges facing us, but as a result of these and still others, today's U.S. soldiers will be the best equipped, the best trained, and the most capable fighting force our nation has ever fielded. These soldiers deserve leaders who are mentally and physically tough, who can set and enforce high standards of training and discipline, and who can earn their confidence. The Ranger course is specifically designed to develop such competent small unit leaders. It will become an increasingly important element of our leadership training as the Army downsizes while still preparing to conduct contingency operations around the world.

This is indeed an exciting and challenging time for our Army. The changes we make will affect the force into the next century. Your thoughts and concerns are important, and we need your input at the Home of the Infantry. Keep watching INFANTRY Magazine for the latest information on changes that affect our branch, and write to tell us what you think.

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